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AN

ANSWER

TO THE

Diſſenters Objections

Againſt the

COMMON PRAYERS,

And ſome other Parts of

Divine-Service

Preſcribed in the

LITURGIE

OF THE

CHURCH of *ENGLAND.*

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I Belive all Conſidering Perſons are by this time ſenſible what advantage the *Papiſts* make of the Separation of ſome *Proteſtants* from the *Church of England.* And the ill effects of it at preſent, and the worſe which we have reaſon to fear, are ſo very diſcernible, that it may now be hoped the Conſideration hereof will ſomething abate thoſe Prejudices of Diſſenters againſt us, which we think have hitherto hindred the prevailing of our Reaſons. Though Prejudice is hard to be remov'd, yet 'tis not impoſſible. Several Ingenuous Perſons of

that Perſuaſion have been reſcu'd from their Prejudices againſt our Communion, when the miſchief of theſe Diviſions was not ſo apparent as 'tis now. I truſt therefore, that at this time many more will, and I pray God that all of them may ſeriouſly and impartially look over the Grounds upon which they have kept up the Separation. For I am perſuaded that their Objections againſt our Communion are not of that Conſequence, as to Juſtifie their forſaking it; and that themſelves would diſcern it, if they would conſider our Anſwers with the ſame Meekneſs and Charity wherewith we offer them. I have with great pleaſure read ſome ſhort Diſcourſes lately Publiſht that tend to this purpoſe, the Good Spirit wherewith they are written ſeeming to be a very likely means of conveying the Argument with all its advantage into the Minds of thoſe that ſhall take the pains to read them. And though I think that which hath been ſaid already, is enough to ſatisfie Judicious Men, yet by the perſuaſion of ſome Friends, I have taken upon me to Anſwer thoſe Particular Objections againſt the Publick Service of God by the *Book of Common-Prayer*, which the Diſſenters are ſaid to inſiſt moſt upon. I muſt confeſs that I have always thought the *Liturgie* of the *Church* of *England* to be ſuch a truely *Evangelical* Form of *Publick Worſhip*, that it would rather have invited *Proteſtants* to our Communion, than kept them from it. And I believe, if the Diſſenters would ſeriouſly read over that Sermon of Dr. *Beverege* concerning the *Excellency and Uſefulneſs of the Common-Prayer*, they would go near to be of the ſame mind. And I hope many of them are ſo, excepting only as to thoſe Particulars wherein they are not ſo well ſatisfied: And therefore I ſhall endeavour through Gods aſſiſtance to lay ſome things together,

gether, of which People of ordinary Capacities may make a Judgment, and which may afford reaſonable ſatisfaction to thoſe that Doubt.

It is by ſome pretended, That the *Confeſſions of Sin* in our Liturgie are *too General*, and that there are *many Particular Sins* which ought to have been *Diſtinctly* Confeſſed, of which there is no mention.

Now I deſire thoſe that are of this Mind to conſider, that there is hardly any thing in Publick Worſhip which requires more Caution and Prudence in the ordering of it, than that Confeſſion of Sin which is to be made by the *whole Congregation*: It may be too *Looſe* and *General* on the one ſide, or it may be too *Particular* and *Diſtinct* on the other. And it is not ſo very eaſy to avoid both inconveniences. The reaſon is, becauſe it ſhould be framed as all may in good earneſt uſe it, notwithſtanding the great Difference amongſt thoſe that are within the Communion of the Church; the Sins of ſome of them being more in *number*, and greater in *kind*, and more *heinouſly aggravated*, than the Sins of others.

There may be this Inconvenience in a Confeſſion *very ſhort* and *General*, that takes in all, that it does not ſo well *ſerve* to excite or to expreſs that due ſenſe of Sin, nor to exerciſe that humility and ſelf abaſement wherewith we ſhould always Confeſs our Sins to God. On the other hand, the Inconvenience of a *very Particular* and *Diſtinct* Confeſſion of Sins will be this, That ſome Sins, with their Aggravations, may be Confeſſed in the Name of the whole Congregation, of which it is by no means to be ſuppoſed that all are guilty; and then they who through the Grace of God have been kept from them, cannot in good earneſt make ſuch Confeſſion.

Now I take it, that the Confeſſions of Sin in the

Daily and in the *Communion Service*, are ſo Judiciouſly framed as to avoid both extreams: Since the Expreſſions have that large meaning as to take in the caſe of the beſt of the Congregation, who may in good earneſt uſe them, and thereby joyn their Confeſſions with the reſt. And on the other ſide, though they are General, yet they are ſo affectionately amplified, that they may well ſerve to expreſs that Contrition which they ought to feel who labour under the Conſcience of moſt heinous Sins; and, if they come duly prepared, to excite a godly ſorrow for Sin, and to exerciſe a due ſenſe of their own unworthineſs of Gods Mercy. And I deſire thoſe who are made to believe otherwiſe, that they would venture to uſe their own Judgment in this matter, and upon this occaſion ſeriouſly to read over thoſe two Confeſſions in our *Liturgie*; the one, that which our daily Worſhip almoſt begins with; the other, in the *Communion Office* before the *Abſolution*. And then let them judge impartially, as in the fear of God, if I have not ſaid the Truth.

But beſides this, the Confeſſion of Sin after the Miniſter has recited each of the *Ten Commandments*, is not only General enough to take in all ſorts of Men; but it ſeems alſo to be as particular as can reaſonably be deſired in a Congregation, becauſe it goes particularly through the Ten Commandments, to which it has been uſual to reduce the whole Duty of Man. And this Method of Confeſſion makes it eaſy for all that conſider their own ways, and endeavour to underſtand their own ſtate, to confeſs every one of them to God, yet more particularly, his known Offences in thought, word, or deed, againſt each Commandment.

Theſe things being well provided for, to find fault with

with this part of our Service, ſeems to argue want of Modeſty or Judgment in thoſe that do ſo. They ſeem to believe ours to be amiſs, becauſe they believe themſelves could make a better. But, if for this and ſuch like reaſons, they think fit to break Communion with us, where will be an end of *Diviſion* and *Separation*? I hope none of our Brethrén will ſay, that they are not to make a Confeſſion of their Sins in a way of expreſſion that is poſſible to be mended; leſt by this means they ſhould never make any Confeſſion of Sin at all: Since it may ſtill remain a Queſtion, whether *this* had not been better left out, or *that* added, after the beſt care is taken. If a Form of Confeſſion of Sins were Compoſed by the wiſeſt of them, I ſuppoſe he would pretend no more than that it is ſo Compoſed, that Gods People might ſafely and profitably uſe it. And this is that we may confidently ſay of the Confeſſions in our *Liturgie*; and if this be truly ſaid, it ought to end the Diſpute.

And yet they who Object the Generalneſs of our Confeſſions againſt us, would not find it an eaſie task to give us better and more unexceptionable. I may ſafely ſay, they would not mend the Matter, if they could prevail to have them as Particular as they are wont to be in the Prayers of ſome that ſeparate from us. For beſides that they Confeſs againſt themſelves ſo many particular Sins as many ſincere Chriſtians cannot in good earneſt acknowledge themſelves to be, or ever to have been guilty of, there is this other great inconvenience in ſuch Confeſſions, that groſs *Hypocrites*, and other *Carnal Profeſſors*, are very apt to go away with an opinion, that their caſe is as good as that of the beſt; ſince by theſe Confeſſions of Sin, which deſcribe their own caſe perhaps truly enough, it ſhould

ſeem

ſeem that the reſt are no better than themſelves. We find it needful to warn thoſe of our own Communion againſt ſuch like miſtakes, though they are not in ſo much danger of falling into them. We are afraid leſt they that live in the Practice of wilful Sins, ſhould think the better of themſelves, becauſe we do all confeſs that we have *erred and ſtrayed from God's ways like loſt ſheep, and have followed too much the devices and deſires of our own hearts, and have offended againſt the holy laws* of God, *and have left undone thoſe things which we ought to have done, and have done thoſe things which we ought not to have done, and that manifold ſins and wickedneſs in thought, word, and deed, have moſt grievouſly been committed by us, againſt the Divine Majeſty, whereby we have provoked moſt juſtly his wrath and indignation againſt us.* But 'tis not hard for us to ſhew theſe Men, that all this may be truly Confeſſed by the ſincere and godly, as well as by Hypocrites; that though the Confeſſion does not mention a difference, yet it does not imply that there is no difference between them, but after all, that theſe are in a ſtate of Impenitence and Damnation, while thoſe are in a ſtate of Salvation, who yet truely confeſs their Sins in the ſame General Words with the reſt of the Congregation. But there is greater danger of this ſelf flattery we are ſpeaking of, where the Common Confeſſion of Sins is ſo very particular as ſome would have ours to be. And though there is *greater need* of Caution againſt it in ſuch places, yet the way of their Confeſſion makes the miſtake *more difficult* to be prevented.

Indeed we find in the Scripture Examples of Holy Men confeſſing ſuch Sins as themſelves were not guilty of. Thus did *Jeremiah*, *Nehemiah*, *Ezra*, &c. But this was upon Solemn Humiliation for thoſe known

and

and publick Idolatries of the Nation, which had brought Gods heavy Judgments upon them, or for Common and Scandalous Tranſgreſſions afterward. They conſidered themſelves as part of that Community which had provoked God to ſend them into Captivity, and therefore they bore their part in the Common Calamity with ſuch meekneſs, and confeſſed the Common Sins with ſuch humility, as if themſelves had offended as greatly in their own Perſons as their Country-men had done. But I conceive there is a great deal of difference between thoſe Confeſſions of Sin, that ſuch extraordinary occaſions of Publick Humiliation require, and thoſe that are fit for the ordinary Service of God in the conſtant and ſtated Aſſemblies of the Church.

But it ought not to be forgot, that thoſe particular Confeſſions of Sin, which ſome Men want in our Liturgie are not properly the matter of that Publick Service we are to offer daily unto God in *Religious Aſſemblies*, but of that Private Devotion which is neceſſary to be performed in our Cloſets. And if we could be perſuaded ſeriouſly to enter upon this Work of Examining our ſelves impartially concerning thoſe Sins which we have more openly or ſecretly committed, and then to humble our ſelves before God for them, with particular Confeſſions and ſutable Prayer for his Grace and Pardon; we ſhould then find our Affections prepared to comply with thoſe more *General* Confeſſions of Sin, which we make with the whole Congregation; we ſhould then have leſs reaſon to complain, that thoſe Confeſſions are not apt to move us, becauſe this way would cure the *deadneſs* of *our hearts*, which commonly are moſt to blame, when we find fault with the means that God hath provided for us.

To conclude this Matter, There is great need of *Particular* Confeſſion of Sins in *Religious Aſſemblies*, but that of another ſort than what I have yet been ſpeaking of; and that is the particular and humble Confeſſion which every *Scandalous* Sinner ought to make in the *Congregation*, for the ſatisfaction of the Church, and the declaration of a true Repentance. This is not properly an Act of *Worſhip*, but of *Diſcipline*, but alas! almoſt loſt in this miſerably divided ſtate of the *Church*; a loſs never enough to be lamented! For ſo it has fallen out, that by quarreling for a Reformation in things of an Indifferent Nature, that ought to be left to the Prudence of Governours; the Communion of *Chriſtians* is broken, and the Spiritual Authority which *Chriſt* left in his *Church* is expoſed to Contempt, which is a Matter of a thouſand times more concern, than all the Objections againſt the Book of *Common-Prayer* put together, though they were as conſiderable as our Adverſaries ſeem to believe they are.

The ſecond Objection I ſhall take notice of, is that againſt the *ſhortneſs of the Collects*, by reaſon of which it is pretended, that the Prayer is *often ſuddenly broken off*, and *then begun again:* And this is thought not ſo agreeable to the *Gravity wherewith this Duty ought to be performed*, nor ſo likely a means of *exciting Reverence* and Devotion in the People, as *one continued Form of Prayer* that might be as long as all thoſe put together. Now in anſwer to this, I ſay,

1. That themeer *ſhortneſs* of a Prayer, is not to be found fault with by any underſtanding *Chriſtian*; ſince this would be to diſparage that *Form* of Prayer which our *Lord* taught his Diſciples, it being not much longer than moſt of our *Collects*, and not ſo long as ſome of them.

2. That

2. That it will be hard to prove, That *many* of theſe ſhort Prayers being offer'd up unto God one *immediately* after another, is either not ſo *Grave* or not ſo *Edifying*, as one *Continued Form*. I do not believe the difference to be ſo great, as it is made by thoſe that do not approve our way. For the *Work of Praying* is as much continued all the while, as if there were but one Continued Form. Indeed, in the Book the *Printed* Prayer breaks off ſomewhat often, and there is a *diſtinction* made between the ſeveral *Collects*, by a New *Title* ſhewing the Matter of the Prayer, and by beginning a New Line. But I hope our Brethren do not mean, that in this there is a defect of Gravity, or any hindrance of Devotion and Edification. For the *abruption* of the *Printed* Forms is by no means an interruption of our Prayer; ſince we ſtill go on in Praying or in giving Thanks to God, and, without breaking off, paſs from one Petition, or Matter of Invocation, to another, as immediately as if the Diſtinct Forms we uſe together were all brought into the Compaſs of One.

And as there is no Interruption of *our Praying*, cauſed by the frequent beginning and ending of the *Collects*; ſo neither can this cauſe an Interruption of *Attention* in the People, which is rather helped by that frequency of ſaying *Amen*, which this way requires. Nor can it be charged with a tendency to Interrupt that *Devout Affection*, and *Godly Diſpoſition* of Mind, which is the beſt thing in Prayer: But on the other hand, this may be kept alive and more effectually ſecured, by calling upon the *Name* of *God*, and pleading the *Merits* of *Chriſt* ſo often as we do. I know ſome have ſaid, this is done more frequently than is meet. But it would be a lamentable thing, if there ſhould be any difference about this Matter.

When the Decence and Convenience of a thing is conſidered, we ſhould attribute much to the Wiſdom of Authority, and to the Judgment of Prudent and Holy Men, ſuch as our firſt Reformers were, and great numbers of Learned Perſons ſince their time were alſo, who thought this manner of Praying to be Grave and Edifying. And I believe others would be of the ſame Mind, if they would not altogether dwell upon their Prejudice againſt our way; but attend a little to thoſe conſiderations that favour it, and which diſcover the advantage and uſefulneſs of it; which ſort of Equity they that are Wiſe and Humble will ſhew to all Men, much more to their Governours.

Now the Invocation of God ſomewhat often by his Attributes, does of it ſelf tend to maintain in our Minds a reverent ſenſe of his Majeſty and Preſence, which we all know is of neceſſary uſe to make us Pray unto him as we ought to do. I make no queſtion but thoſe that have been blamed for repeating *Lord, Lord,* ſo very often in their *Extempore* Prayers, would think themſelves ſome what hardly uſed, if they ſhould not be believed, in ſaying, that this was not for want of Matter, but for the exciting of a reverent ſenſe of Gods Authority in themſelves and others. And I think there is a little more reaſon why this Conſtruction ſhould be made of the frequent calling upon God by his Name and Perfections, in the Prayers of the Church.

In like manner the frequency of mentioning the *Merits* and *Mediation* of *Chriſt*, is profitable for the ſtrengthening of our Faith and Aſſurance that we ſhall be heard. And to Pray unto God in the Name of Chriſt being the moſt diſtinguiſhing Character of our *Chriſtian* Devotion, This alſo will juſtifie our frequent uſe of it. And the reaſon is ſo much the ſtronger, becauſe

this

this is one main thing that diſtinguiſheth us from the *Church* of *Rome*, which pretendeth the Mediation of the *Virgin Mary*, and the *Angels*, and the *Departed Saints*, as well as of *Jeſus Chriſt*. And it had not been ſo agreeable to the Principles of the Reformation, to have left the Name and Mediation of *Chriſt* out of the Concluſion of any of the Collects, when this Church declared her deteſtation of calling upon God in any other Name, but the Name of *Chriſt*. This is all I ſhall ſay to this Matter; and I hope enough is ſaid to remove the Prejudice of all Sober and Underſtanding Perſons againſt the *ſhortneſs* of the Collects, and againſt the recital of the Name or Attributes of *God*, and of the Name and Merits of *Chriſt* in every one of them.

The next Exception I ſhall take notice of, is that againſt the *Repetition* of the *Lords Prayer* in the Offices of the Liturgie, and of that Hymne, *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy-Ghoſt*, &c. and of that Petition, *Lord have mercy upon us*, and the like.

Now I hope that they are but very few, and I heartily wiſh they were none at all, that ſo little underſtand the *Chriſtian Religion*, as to diſapprove all uſe of theſe Forms in our Worſhip: I do not mean of the *Lords Prayer* only, but of thoſe Affectionate Petitions, *Lord have mercy upon us, Chriſt have mercy upon us*, and of that excellent *Doxologie, Glory be to the Father*, &c. which moreover contains a ſhort Confeſſion of our Faith, in oppoſition to the *Arrians* and *Socinians*. But that which is thought too much, is that theſe things are too often repeated, and that regard enough is not had to that Rule of our Saviour, *When ye Pray uſe not vain Repetitions*.

But I hope nothing of this will appear upon farther

Examination. For by our Saviours Caution againſt *Vain* Repetitions, it ſeems that there are ſome Repetitions which are *not vain*, and which therefore he doth not forbid. And this we muſt neceſſarily ſuppoſe, becauſe himſelf Praying in his *Agony*, *thrice* uſed the ſame Petition, and that in the *ſame* Words. Now the Vanity of this kind among the *Heathens* which our Saviour would have his Diſciples to avoid, ſeems to be that Repetition which proceeds from the Affectation of much ſpeaking in Prayer, or from a belief that God will not be moved to help us, unleſs we uſe many Words, or repeat, the ſame thing over in a tedious manner. And thus the Prophets of *Baal* cried out from morning till noon, *O Baal hear us*; *O Baal hear us*. We are far enough, I hope, from ſuch kind of Repetitions. And ſince they are ſuch tedious Repetitions as theſe, which our Saviour here calls Vain, Men ſhould have a care of calling thoſe Repetitions of Good Prayers and Praiſes Vain, which are nothing like theſe, eſpecially in contempt of a Publick Rule.

I never yet could find, that thoſe who charge our *Liturgie* with this fault, have attempted to ſhew us thoſe marks of difference, by which we might diſtinguiſh Vain Repetitions from thoſe that are not Vain, which I think their pretence obliged them to do. But although the Gravity and Uſefulneſs of that part of our Service, which they make this Objection againſt, might well excuſe us from any farther Vindication; yet I ſhall ſay ſomething to this purpoſe, for the ſatisfaction of thoſe that are willing to be ſatisfied.

I conceive there are theſe two things only to be regarded in uſing Repetitions in Prayer or Thankſgiving, that they may not be liable to the charge of Vanity.

1. *That the Matter Repeated be very weighty and conſiderable,*

conſiderable, and *that it be ſingularly apt to move thoſe Pious Affections* which God is moſt pleaſed with in our Addreſſes to him. And in this reſpect I dare ſay there is no ſober Chriſtian but will grant our Repetitions to be ſecured from Vanity. Such Petitions as *Lord have mercy upon us*, deſerve the putting forth of the whole ſtrength of our Deſires and Affections. And when we aſcribe *Glory to the Holy Trinity*, we expreſs what we ought to make the end of all our Worſhip, and of all the Actions of our Lives. And therefore theſe things will bear being Repeated, and the Repetition of them may be profitable both to excite and to expreſs the fervour of our Minds. And I truſt we ſhall agree, that if any one Form of Prayer will bear being uſed more than once, when we Worſhip God, it is the *Lords Prayer*.

2. The ſecond thing required to ſecure Repetitions from Vanity, is, That they be *framed with Judgment, both with regard to the frequency, that they do not come over too often, and with regard to the diſpoſal of them*, that they come in *fitly* and in *due place*. I do not mean that this is ſo very nice a thing, that the difference of an Hairs breadth, as we uſe to ſay, will ſpoil all: For in things of this Nature there is a Latitude in which Prudent Men may take their choice; but only that this is to be done with diſcretion and choice, and with reſpect to the Ends for which Repetitions may be uſeful. And I am perſuaded that this alſo is not wanting in our *Liturgie*. For I do not find that this was ever Objected againſt the Repetitions we mean, that they are ordered injudiciouſly, unleſs upon the only account of too much frequency. And yet the *Lords Prayer* is but twice in the Ordinary Service, and but once in every other diſtinct Office of Prayer or Thankſgiving. The *Gloria Patri* is uſed

but

but once at our beginning to Praiſe God with Spiritual *Hymns*, and once at the Concluſion of every Pſalm, and of ſome of the Hymns, beſides one recital thereof in the Litany, when that is uſed. And as for thoſe ſhort Ejaculations, *Lord have mercy upon us; Chriſt have mercy upon us.* The former is repeated but once in the Ordinary Service, and both but twice in the Litany. So that there is no ſuch ground of Complaint as is pretended, that there are many Repetitions in our Form of Worſhip, much leſs that thoſe are Vain which are there. And I do not ſee how they that charge our Common-Prayer Book with Vain Repetitions upon theſe accounts, can have a reverent eſteem of the 136 *Pſalm*, where for 26 Verſes together, *His mercy endureth for ever*, is repeated in every Verſe.

There is indeed one thing more requiſite to ſecure our Repetitions of the ſame thing in calling upon God from being Vain, and that is, That our Deſires and Affections ſhould be raiſed to keep pace with our Expreſſions. But this belongs to us to take care of. And if we would endeavour to ſtir up in our ſelves that Zeal and Devotion of Heart, which ſhould anſwer that Appearance thereof which theſe Repetitions make, this would ſatisfie us beyond all other Argument, that they are not Vain. To Conclude this Matter, I deſire thoſe who do not yet approve our Repetition of the Lords Prayer, and the other ſhort Devotions, to conſider whether it be ſo eaſie to ſpend the time it takes up more profitably, than by joining in good earneſt with the Congregation in theſe Prayers.

In the next place, the *Reſponſals* of the *Congregation* are Matter of Offenee to ſome Perſons; They do not approve the *Peoples ſaying the Confeſſion and the Lords Prayer after the Miniſter*, nor *their alternate Reciting*

citing ſome Petitions in the daily Service, with the *Pſalms and Hymns,* and leaſt of all do they approve *that part* which the *Congregation bears in the Prayers of the Litany.*

Now it were well, if they, who blame our Prayers upon this account, would conſider what has often been ſaid to ſhew the uſefulneſs of this way. Namely, That it is apt to *check a wandring Spirit,* and to *help and relieve Attention;* and withal, that it tends to *quicken a lively Forwardneſs and Zeal in Gods Service,* whilſt we *invite and provoke one another* to Pray and to give Thanks. Theſe things we ſay not without ſome experience of their Truth, and we think they carry plain Reaſon along with them, and I do not find that they have been Contradicted by the Leaders of the Diſſenting Party. It is True, they have declared their diſlike of this way but ſtill without taking notice of what may be ſaid for it. If I have obſerved right, the main Reaſon of their diſlike is this, That the *Miniſter,* as they ſay, *is appointed for the people in all Publick Services appertaining to God,* and that the *Scripture* makes the *Miniſter to be the Mouth of the People to God in Prayer.* And therefore I ſhall Examine this Reaſon in the firſt place.

And, 1. If it were granted that the Scripture maketh the Miniſter to be the Mouth of the People to God in Publick Worſhip; yet this muſt by no means be ſo Interpreted, as to make all Vocal Prayer and Thankſgiving in Religious Aſſemblies unlawful to the People. For then they muſt not declare their Aſſent to the Prayers which the Miniſter utters, by ſaying *Amen,* which yet the Scripture approves, and is not diſapproved by any of thoſe that Object our way againſt us. Nor muſt it be ſo taken, as if the People were to be excluded from a Vocal Part in Praiſing God by

Hymn's

Hymns and *Spiritual Songs*. For this also is warranted by Scripture, and seems to be confessed by our Dissenting Brethren, who allow the People to *Sing Psalms* with the Minister.

Now he that audibly says *Amen* to the Prayers of the Congregation, makes a *short Responsal* to the Minister: And moreover, they that sing *Psalms*, in which there are Passages of Prayer, Confessions, or Petitions, containing matter of Invocation proper for us, as the Psalms often do, they Pray Vocally. So that notwithstanding what is pretended concerning the Ministers being the Peoples Mouth to God, it shall still be lawful for the People, sometimes to joyn *Vocally* in *Prayer* as well as in Praise, and not only by saying *Amen*, but by expressing the very words of *Confession* or *Petition*.

But, 2*ly*. Where is it said in Scripture, that *the Minster is the Mouth of the People to God*, or that no Prayer may be Offered up to God *in Religious Assemblies*, otherwise than by the *Mouth of the Minister*? I doubt these sayings are grown so familiar amongst some People, that they believe them to be the Words, or very near the Words of Scripture: But there are no such *Words* nor *meaning* in the *Bible* that I can find, or that they have found for us. It is not good to pretend the Authority of Scripture for a Doctrine that is not to be met with there.

It is true that the Minister is the Mouth of the People to God in all those Prayers which he utters for them, and because these are many more than what the People themselves utter, he may be said to be their Mouth to God *Comparatively*, but not *Absolutely*. It will be true also, that the Minister is *appointed for the People in all Publick Services appertaining to God*, if this be understood for the *most part*, or of *All* with

with little exception. Some Publick Services there are which are incloſed in *his Office*, and he is appointed for them in *behalf of the People*; that is, for *Adminiſtring the Sacrament*, *Abſolving the Penitent*, and *Bleſſing the People*. And therefore Prayers that immediately concern theſe things are to be pronounced by him only. And as for the reſt, the *Order* of the Church, and the *Authority* and *Dignity* of the Miniſterial Function, makes it fit and decent that the Miniſter ſhould utter *moſt* ever of them; and that in thoſe wherein the People have their part, he ſhould ever *go before*, and *lead* them, and *guide* the whole performance: which is all taken care for in our *Liturgie*.

I ſaid before, that the Diſſenters do not utterly debar the People from all Vocal Prayer and thankſgiving of their own in Gods Solemn Worſhip. And therefore it were great pity that they ſhould keep at a diſtance from us upon Queſtions of this Nature. And I heartily intreat them to conſider whether they may not upon their own Principles come up to the Rules and Cuſtoms of our Church in this thing.

1. If they grant the Peoples intereſt in Vocal Praiſe, let them conſider whether they have reaſon to Condemn the Peoples bearing a part in any of the *Hymn's* and *Pſalms* by *alternate Reſponſes*. For the plain End of reciting thoſe Pſalms in the Congregation, is to Praiſe and Magnifie God's Name, and to excite in our Hearts ſuch like devout affections in doing ſo, as thoſe Holy Men felt in themſelves, who were aſſiſted by Gods Spirit in Compoſing them. And therefore the Diſſenters are not obliged to demand that the People be ſilent all this while. I have heard ſome of them ſay, that if theſe *Pſalms* and *Hymn's* were *Sung*, the Congregation might then challenge to put in their Voices with the Miniſter. But when

they are *read*, as they generally are in our Parish Churches, they say this ought to be the Work of the Minister only. But I cannot see why singing or not singing should make such a Difference. I grant it were better if they were every where sung, because this is more suitable to the Design of *Psalms*, than bare *reciting* is. But if they be not sung (which is customarily omitted in *Parish* Churches, for want of skill as I conceive) the next use of them that is most agreeable to their Nature and Design, is not that the Minister should *read all*, as he does other parts of the Scripture; but that the *People* should *recite* the *Psalms* and other Godly *Hymn's* with the Minister by way of *Answering in turns*, as the Custom is with us, more or less in most Places. For when the People rise up to do this in order to the Solemn Praising of God, this is much nearer to singing, wherein the People are allowed to bear a part in God's Vocal Praise, than the Ministers reciting all himself, and shutting out the People from any part thereof.

But it is Objected particularly against the reciting of *one* Verse of the *Psalms* by the Minister, and *another* by the People, that the Peoples Verse is in a manner lost to some of the Congregation, since in the *confused murmur of so many Voices nothing can be distinctly heard.*

Now if our Brethren should admit of what has been already said in Vindication of these Responsals; I hope this Objection will not be insisted upon. I grant, that which is uttered in the Congregation ought to be understood. But then those Verses of the *Psalms* which are uttered by the Congregation may be well enough understood by every one that has a Book, or who is acquainted competently well with the *Psalms* themselves. I need

need not ſay much in anſwer to this Objection, becauſe it may be removed by every one that makes it, if he can read, and will bring a Book along with him. And as for thoſe that cannot, I muſt needs ſay, that it is not ſo hard as is pretended for them alſo to take thoſe Verſes which are uttered by thoſe that are near them, if they will carefully attend. And I have been credibly informed, that ſome devout People that *could never read*, have attained to an ability of reciting moſt of the Pſalms without Book, by often hearing them in thoſe Churches where they are *alternately recited*; which ſhews that the *Murmur* is not ſo *confuſed*, but that the Words may be heard diſtinctly enough to be underſtood, if one has a mind to it. And then they that cannot read may by this means be more quickned, than otherwiſe they would be, to learn to read; however to attend, and to learn the Pſalms without Book, that they alſo may bear their part *Vocally* with the Congregation in God's Praiſes.

I ſhall add, That for the moſt part the *Pſalms* are recited alternately in thoſe Churches onely, where it may be reaſonably preſumed that the whole Congregation can read, very few excepted. For by the way, this Method of reading the Pſalms is not Commanded, but every Pariſh Church is left at liberty to obſerve her own Cuſtom about it. In the *Country* Pariſhes the Miniſter generally recites all, (which way I do not think ſo convenient as that of *Reſponſals*, for the Reaſon I gave before.) But there ought to be no breach amongſt us about things of this Nature, in which one way may perhaps be more convenient in one reſpect, and the contrary more convenient in another; and then we ſhould not altogether dwell upon Conſiderations that favour our own opinion, but attend alſo to thoſe that may be offered for another,

and put the beſt conſtruction upon it, eſpecially in favour of a Publick Rule, or a received Cuſtome. This is more *Chriſtian-like*, and will be more for the honour of Religion, and the good of other Mens Souls, and for our own Comfort at laſt, than to ſtrain our utmoſt Wit to find faults with, and to aggravate Inconveniences againſt the Laws or Uſages of the Church where we live. This that I am now ſpeaking of is not a *Law* impoſed on all the Churches of our National Communion, but a *Cuſtom* of ſome of them, which I thought good to defend, that they who think not ſo highly well of it as I do, may not yet break Communion with thoſe that uſe it. And I hope our Brethren, who grant the People are not to be excluded from Vocal Praiſe, will conſider that there is no inconvenience in uttering the *Pſalms* by *Reſponſals*, but that which is pretended concerning the difficulty to underſtand what is ſaid: And that there is very little reaſon for this pretence, ſeeing the *Pſalms* are the moſt *known* parts in the *Bible*, and that if thoſe few who cannot read, will be careful, they may reap great benefit by attending to the Congregation, as ſome have done, till themſelves have been able to recite the Pſalms.

2. If they grant it Lawful and Expedient, that the People ſhould joyn in Vocal *Praiſe*; I cannot ſee how they can Diſpute the lawfulneſs or expedience of their joyning with the Miniſter ſometimes in Vocal *Prayer*. It will not be eaſie to ſhew a Reaſon why this ſhould be diſſallowed, if that be allowed. If it be ſaid, there is ſome Example and Warrant in the Scripture for the one, but not for the other; it ſeems to be a good anſwer, that there is ſuch a parity of reaſon, as that the expreſs warrant of the Scripture for one, is an implied warrant for the other: Unleſs a Man will ſay,

ſay, that *Nothing muſt be done in Gods Worſhip ſo which there is not expreſs and particular Warrant*; which though a Man may ſay when he is oppoſing a way of Worſhip which he likes not, yet he will not ſay it, when he comes to defend his own. It is a Principle that no Man will ſtand by, though ſometimes he may take it up to ſerve a turn. The truth is, the Scripture does not pretend to give us a perfect account of the Order and Manner of the Solemn Worſhip of God either in the *Synagogues* of the *Jews*, or in the *Churches* of *Chriſtians*; nor to preſcribe a Form for the Service of God by the Church in after times. Several things were done in the *Religious Aſſemblies* of *Chriſtians* firſt of all, that were peculiar to the extraordinary effuſion of the Spirit in thoſe times, and ſeveral that were fit enough for the conduct of Gods Service when Miracles ſhould ceaſe; and of both ſorts *ſome* are intimated in St. *Paul's* two Epiſtles to the *Corinthians*; but no Man that underſtands theſe things will ſay, that they are all intimated there, or any where elſe in the *New Teſtament*. And therefore it does not follow that they did not obſerve in their Worſhip, this or that Cuſtom; from hence, that we do not find it written that they obſerved it. We do not read that the *Lords Prayer* was uſed in the time of the Apoſtles; but I ſuppoſe they are very few who will therefore make a queſtion whether it was uſed or not. We are able to ſhew that the Peoples joining in Vocal Prayer with the Miniſter was very anciently practiſed. In imitation of the way of the Chriſtians, *Julian* the *Apoſtate* appointed a Form of Prayer for the *Heathen*, to be recited in Parts; which ſhews *Naz. Orat.* 3. that this was a known Cuſtom of the Church in thoſe days, and that it had been generally practiſed before. And if this was the Primitive way, it is more probable

bable that it was the way in the *Apoſtles time*, than that it was not. But of this let every one Judge as he ſees cauſe. This is certain, That the Apoſtles left the Governours of the Church under the Obligation of ordering the Service of God according to General Rules, and preſcribed that all things ſhould be done Decently and in Order, and to Edification. And I do not think that our Brethren will ever be able to ſhew, that this Practice which they except againſt, is not agreeable to ſuch General Rules; which yet they ought to do very fully and plainly, to excuſe their Nonconformity.

That wich is moſt urged, is, That the People ſpeaking to God in the Church is *Diſorderly*, and a breaking in upon the Miniſters Office. But will they ſay that the *Children of Iſrael* intrenched upon the Prieſt, when they *all bowed themſelves upon the Pavement, and Worſhiped the Lord, and Praiſed him, ſaying, For he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever*; 2 *Chron.* 7.3? I have already obſerved, That Eccleſiaſtical Order is in this matter ſecured by the Miniſters *Preſiding* in Gods Publick Worſhip, and *guiding* the whole performance of it.

But not to allow the People to make an *audible Confeſſion of Sin* after the Miniſter, nor to *utter ſome few affectionate Petitions*, and thoſe very ſhort, to which they are alſo *invited* and *led* by him; this rather ſeems to ſavour of an affectation of undue ſuperiority over the People, than to proceed from any fear, leſt by this means they ſhould be *incouraged to invade the Miniſterial Office*. I believe the *Laity* of our Communion have as Reverend an eſteem of the Sacred Function as their Neighbours, and to raiſe the Compariſon no higher, have ſhewn themſelves ever ſince the Reformation, as much afraid to uſurp the *proper*

Offices

Offices of the *Clergie*, as thoſe that have been drawn away from the Communion of the Church, and have been taught that they muſt not ſay a word in Publick Prayer, but *Amen*. We ſhould not think that we endanger our Order and the reſpect that is due to it, if we do not arrogate more to our ſelves than is meet. It has been one great fault of the Church of *Rome* to advance the *Prieſt* unreaſonably above the *People* in the Adminiſtration of Holy Things. The Diſſenting Miniſters may be a little guilty of this, though in a particular wherein that Church is not guilty of it. They ſeem to make too little account of the *Flock of Chriſt*, in Condemning our Church for permitting and requiring the People to Offer up thoſe Petitions to God with their *own Mouths*, which are appointed for them in the *Liturgie*. The Miniſter aſſuming the whole to himſelf does not indeed make *him much greater* in the Church than he is, but they that obſtinately deny any part of it to the People, do make *them* of *much lower and meaner Condition* in the Church than they ought to be. And it is ſomething ſtrange, that thoſe very Perſons who Contend for the intereſt of the *Laity* in ſome buſineſs in *Religious Aſſemblies* that more nearly touches upon *Eccleſiaſtical Authority*, than the bare offering up of a few Petitions to God, ſhould be ſo unwilling to allow them this. They affirm that the People have a right to be heard before *Biſhops*, *Presbyters* and *Deacons* are *Ordained*, and as ſeveral of them contend to interpoſe alſo in all *Acts* of *Diſcipline:* and yet they do not think them qualified to bear any part in the Prayers of the Congregation, unleſs by ſaying *Amen* to what the Miniſter utters. Theſe things do not ſeem to hang well together. And I am perſuaded our Church has ordered this Matter with more Judgment and Impartiality,

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in aſſigning to the People their Intereſt both in Acts of *Worſhip* and *Diſcipline*, within ſuch Rules and Limits, that the *Clergie* and *Laity* may know what their proper place and buſineſs is in all *Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies*.

I have heard ſome Object againſt the Peoples uttering Prayers and Praiſes in the Congregation, that it is *Forbidden Women to ſpeak in the Church*. But this is ſtrangely miſapplied to the Matter in hand. For it is plain, that the ſpeaking mentioned by the Apoſtle, ſignifies nothing but *Prophecying*, *Interpreting*, *Preaching*, or *Inſtructing*; and that the reaſon why he will not allow this to the Woman, is becauſe Preaching is an *Act* that implies *Authority*, whereas the Womans part is *Obedience* and *Subjection*. They that will read the whole Chapter, will find that this is the true meaning of St. *Paul*. And indeed the place it ſelf ſufficiently ſhews it, which I ſhall therefore ſet down. *Let your Women keep ſilence in the Churches, for it is not permitted unto them to ſpeak, but they are Commanded to be under Obedience, as alſo the Law ſaith. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their Husbands at home, for it is a ſhame for a Woman to ſpeak in the Church*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 34, 35. The Subject of this Diſcourſe is briefly expreſt in the 39. Verſe. *Brethren covet to prophecy, and forbid not to ſpeak with tongues*. Now the reaſon given why the Woman is not to ſpeak, *viz.* becauſe ſhe is to be *under Obedience*, does plainly reſtrain *that Speaking* to *Prophecying*, and the like, which is moreover the only ſort of *Speaking* that is diſcourſed of in this place.

I know no particular Exception under this Head which remains to be ſpoken to, unleſs it be, that the People are ſaid to utter the *Words of Invocation in the Litany for the moſt part*, the Miniſter all the while

while *ſuggeſting the Matter of it to them.* But this Objection will be of no force, if what I have ſaid concerning the lawfulneſs of allowing the People an Intereſt in *Vocal Prayer* be admitted; unleſs the Objection be this, That they are allowed to bear *too conſiderable a part* in that Prayer, and ſomewhat to the diſparagement of the Miniſters Office. And then I anſwer, That, upon Reaſons which I ſhall preſently Offer, it ſeems to me to be otherwiſe. I ſhall only premiſe that I am really troubled for their ſakes who put us upon this Defence, that in Matters of Prudence and Expedience wherein there is a conſiderable latitude to order them well enough, that in theſe things I ſay they ſeem to yield ſo very little to the Authority and Judgment of their Governours. I do not think it hard to make out the Prudence of theſe Determinations ſo much diſliked: This is not the thing I am troubled at. But I think it hard that a *Publick Rule* ſhould not be thought reaſon enough to juſtifie things of this ſort, and to oblige the People to compliance without more adoe. I am ſorry that our Diſſenting Brethren do not conſider that it is ſome diminution to their Modeſty and Humility, to challenge, as in effect they do, a nice and punctual account of the prudence of the Publick Orders of this Church, before they will Submit to 'em in Practice. Now as to the Objection before us. The Peoples Vocal Part in the Litany ſeems to be no diſparagement at all to the Miniſters Office upon theſe accounts.

1. Although the Formal Words, of *Good Lord deliver us*, and *We beſeech thee to hear us Good Lord*, be uttered by the People, yet it muſt be acknowledged that this is but *part* of the Prayer of the Litany, that which the Miniſter utters being the *other part* and the *far greater* part.

2. That the Words of *Prayer* are *begun* by the Miniſter, not only in the Invocation of the Holy Trinity firſt of all; but in that Prayer *Remember not Lord our Offences*, and *Spare us Good Lord*, and *We beſeech thee O Lord God*, &c. So that the Miniſter does utter the *Formal* Words of Prayer, and the People take them all afterward from him, excepting only the Words of that Petition, *Good Lord deliver us.*

3. They are but theſe two ſhort and known Petitions, *Good Lord deliver us*, and *We beſeech thee to hear us Good Lord*, upon the uttering of which by the People the weight of the Objection lies. And if they will allow the People any Vocal part in the Words of Prayer, I know not what Petitions are more proper for them than ſuch as theſe. As for the *Repetition* of them, there is this reaſon for it, that there is ſtill new and diſtinct Matter to which they are applied. And I will be bold to ſay, that the repeated application of them is a great relief to attention and minding the buſineſs we are about, and evidently contributes to keep up an affectionate and ardent frame of Heart, in deſiring thoſe weighty things we ask of God in this Prayer. I could almoſt appeal to the keeneſt of our Adverſaries, if that Petition, *Good Lord deliver us*, were applied but once in groſs to the *Deprecations* and *Supplications* of that part of the *Litany* to which it belongs, whether we ſhould not be more apt to let our attention fall, and to forget the meaning, and to languiſh in the offering up of thoſe Prayers, than as it is now ordered. But,

4. I think it is plain, that in offering up theſe Prayers to God, the Miniſter has the *Principal* and *Guiding* part, in that he utters all the *diſtinct Matter* of the Prayer, which the People do not, whereas he utters Words of *Invocation* as well as they. And

now

now I desire our Brethren to consider, whether if the People were to utter that which is the Ministers part now; and the Minister to say that only which is theirs, they would not have more grievously complained that the Ministers Authority was slighted in the whole design, since he seemed only to learn from the People what the Congregation was to pray for.

It is of great Consequence with what Mind we come to consider any thing; if with prejudice and dislike, we are then ready to turn all that is reasonably produced in favour for it, into an argument of distaste; and that seems unreasonable, with the quite contrary, to which we should have been more displeas'd if this had been instead of the other. But surely we may judge of these things with *Impartiality*, and if need be with *Candor*, as we ought to do. And if the difficulty of doing so be seen in the frequency of doing the Contrary, even amongst Men otherwise good, we have the greater need to intreat of God to enlighten our Understandings, and to rescue us from prejudices and passions in the Judgment we make of all things of this nature. I do not intimate this any way in affectation of seeming not to need this exhortation my self; but remembring my own frailty, I do hereupon admonish my self as well as others. In the mean time, if there be any Bias upon my Judgment in that esteem, I declare my self to have of the Prayers of the Church; I must confess that I believe my self to be biast on the right hand. For I take it to be much more for the *safety of my own Soul*, as well as the *security of the Churches Peace*, that I should be inclined rather to Judge too favourably of Publick Rules, than to value them beneath their just worth and usefulness. But I must confess, That of all the Prayers in our *Li-*

turgie that are of Humane Compoſition, I ſhould be moſt unwilling to part with the *Litany* as it now ſtands there. It ſeems to be, what it was deſigned to be, a Form of Prayer apt to excite our moſt *intenſe* and *fervent* deſires of Gods Grace and Mercy. Whileſt the Miniſter leads the people to pray againſt thoſe ſeveral Sins and Evils which a *Chriſtian* is moſt concerned to be afraid of, and at the end of every convenient period, the Congregation with one voice cries out, *Good Lord deliver us*; while the Miniſter leads them to pray for all thoſe particular Bleſſings which ought to be moſt dear to a *Chriſtian*, and the whole Congregation with one voice cries out, *We beſeech thee to hear us Good Lord.* Theſe Prayers ſeem to be offered with ſuch affection, as I am not well able to expreſs by any ordinary inſtance: In Offering them we ſeem to be as paſſionately concerned as a Malefactor upon his knees, that begs his own life. The whole Office is framed with reſpect both to matter and contrivance, for the raiſing of the utmoſt Devotion of good Chriſtians, and for the warming of the coldeſt hearts by the heat of the Congregation. And in ſuch a diſpoſition it is then moſt fit to expreſs our Charity, by praying for others, even all ſorts of Men, as diſtinctly and particularly as Publick Prayers will bear. And this the fullneſs of this Prayer doth admirably provide for, as no Man will deny, who conſiders it without averſion and prejudice againſt it, which I pray God deliver all well meaning people from, that they may not deprive themſelves of ſo great a benefit.

I ſhall ſay no more concerning this Matter of the peoples joyning in Vocal Prayer and Praiſe. And indeed the Reaſon why I have dwelt ſo long upon an Anſwer to this Objection, is, becauſe I have obſerved, that ſome *honeſt* perſons are very confident, that in this

this thing at leaſt our *Liturgie* is to be blamed. And I hope what hath been ſaid will to ſuch perſons give reaſonable ſatisfaction, that for this thing it is rather to be commended. But becauſe upon this occaſion the part of the Congregation in the *Litany* was laſt mentioned: I ſhall now ſpeak briefly to ſome other Objections againſt the Litany which are commonly made.

The firſt of theſe is, That we pray to be *delivered from all deadly ſin*, which ſeems to imply that there are ſome Sins which are not deadly.

Now in anſwer to this it is by ſome truly enough ſaid, That theſe Words do not neceſſarily imply a diſtinction between Sins that *are*, and Sins that *are not deadly*. But admitting that ſuch a diſtinction was intended, yet I think no underſtanding *Chriſtian* has reaſon to be offended with it. By *Deadly Sin* a *Proteſtant* means all ſuch Sin as puts a Man out of a ſtate of Favour with God. But all Sins are not thus Deadly. *For in many things we offend all*, and as for thoſe Sins which the Regenerate commit through Humane Frailty only, they are not thereby put into a ſtate of Damnation. And though all Sin be in its own Nature Deadly or Damnable; yet through the Mercy of God, and the Merits of Chriſt, Sins of meer Infirmity are not imputed to true Believers, and therefore not Deadly to them. But there are ſome Sins ſo heinous, that he who Commits them is thereby put into a Damnable ſtate, and till he recovers himſelf by true Repentance and Actual Reformation, he cannot upon any good ground promiſe to himſelf that the *wrath of God does not abide upon him*. And 'tis of ſuch Sins as theſe that this paſſage is to be underſtood, as appears by Deadly Sin being added to *Fornication*. *From Fornication and all other Deadly Sin, Good Lord deliver*

liver us. So that this Petition ſeems to be of the ſame Nature with that of the *Pſalmiſt. Keep back thy Servant alſo from preſumptuous ſins, let not them have dominion over me, then ſhall I be upright, and I ſhall be innocent from the great Tranſgreſſion, Pſal.* 19. 13. Whereas therefore theſe Words of the *Litany* ſeem to ſuppoſe that ſome Sins are not Deadly, we ſhould be very unjuſt to make ſuch a Conſtruction of them, as if they implyed that ſome Sins are *in their own nature Venial,* and ſo ſlight, that they will be forgiven without any conſideration; for as I have ſhewn, we may hold that deſtinction which the Words ſuppoſe, and yet retain that *Proteſtant* Doctrine, that no Sin is forgiven, but through the *Mercy of God,* and the *Merits and Mediation of Chriſt.*

Again, ſome are offended with our praying againſt *Sudden Death.*

But why ſhould we not by Sudden Death underſtand our being taken out of this World when we are not fit to die? For ſometimes a thing is ſaid to be Sudden to us when we are not prepared for it. And in this ſenſe can any good *Chriſtian* find fault with the Petition? But ſuppoſe, that by *Sudden Death* we mean what is commonly underſtood by it, that is a Death of which a Man has not the leaſt warning by Sickneſs: Are there not reaſons why even good Men may deſire not to die ſuddenly. May they not when they find themſelves drawing towards their end, by their good Inſtructions and Admonitions make impreſſion upon their Friends, Companions, and Relations to the bettering of them? May not their Counſels be more effectual with them than ever they were before? And is it not reaſonable to believe they will be ſo? As for themſelves, may not the warning they have of Approaching Death be improved to make them more

fit

fit to die than they were in their perfect health? In a Word, he that thinks himſelf to have ſufficiently *perfected holineſs in the fear of God*, and not to ſtand in need of thoſe Acts of Self Examination, Humiliation, and Devotion, by which good Men improve the warnings of Death, which Mortal Sickneſs or Extream Age gives them, let him ſuſpend his Act, and refuſe to joyn with us when we pray God to *deliver us from Sudden Death.*

There is yet another Objection which I ſhould not have named, but that ſome of the Diſſenters, who ſeem to underſtand very little of Religion by making it, have it often in their Mouths. That is, when we pray to be *delivered by the Myſtery of Chriſts Holy Incarnation*, &c. *by his Agony and Bloody Sweat, by his Croſs and Paſſion*, &c. *and by the coming of the Holy Ghoſt:* They ſay, ſome of them, that this is *Swearing*, ſome that it is *Conjuring*, and I know not what. For which ſayings, ſavouring of great profaneneſs, they ought to be ſeverely rebuked; and that is all the anſwer they ſhould have, were it not that ſome of them may be groſly ignorant of the true Senſe of theſe Petitions.

And therefore I ſay, that they might eaſily ſuppoſe, if they would give their Minds to it, that we pray to be delivered through the Saving Efficacy of *Chriſts Incarnation and Paſſion*, &c. And yet I do not take this to be the principal meaning, or that which was intended. For I conceive that to be this, that when we ſay, *By the Myſtery of thy Holy Incarnation*, and *by thy Croſs and Paſſion*, &c. *Good Lord deliver us*; we implore Chriſt, who has already ſhewed ſuch ineſtimable goodneſs towards us, by taking our Nature to his Divinity, to *Die upon the Croſs*, to be *Buried*, to *Riſe again*, to *aſcend into Heaven*, and there to *intercede with the Father*

Father for us, and by *ſending the Holy Ghoſt* to qualifie the Apoſtles for their great Work of carrying the Word of Salvation into the World: I ſay we implore him who hath already done ſuch mighty things for our Salvation, and we plead with him by that goodneſs which he hath already given us ſuch great demonſtrations of, by thoſe wonders of Mercy that he hath wrought for us, that he would now go on to deliver us by his powerful Grace from theſe Evils which we pray againſt. And this is ſo reaſonable, ſo devout and affectionate, ſo humble and thankful a way of Praying, that I am ſorry that any who call themſelves Believers ſhould be ſo ignorant as not to underſtand it, or ſo profane and unlike what they pretend to be, as to deride it. Though God does not need to be put in mind of his former benefits towards us; yet it is fit for us to mention them in our moſt earneſt Prayers, not only becauſe we are to make a grateful acknowledgment of them to him, but likewiſe, becauſe by this means we encourage our ſelves to ask in Faith; ſince he who unaskt hath done ſuch great things for us, will not fail upon our earneſt and humble prayer, which himſelf alſo hath required, to give us all other good things that we need, and to deliver us from all real evils of which we are in danger.

I proceed next to conſider whether there be any juſt cauſe to find fault with the reading of the *Apocryphal* Leſſons in our Church.

And, 1. It muſt be acknowledged by thoſe who allow the uſefulneſs of *Sermons* and *Catechiſing* in the Church, that thoſe Chapters may be read in the Church, though they are not Divinely inſpired Writings, ſince no ſober Man will pretend that the Miniſter *Preaches* or *Catechiſes* by *Inſpiration*. But if other good

good Inſtructions may be read or recited in the Church, beſides the Word of God it ſelf, why may not ſome Leſſons out of the *Apocryphal* Books be read, which contain excellent Rules of good Life, and Exhortations and encouragements to Virtue and Piety; eſpecially ſince thoſe writings were greatly eſteemed by the Church in its pureſt Ages, when they and other Humane Writings were alſo Publickly read, as well as the Holy Scriptures?

2. If it be ſaid that thoſe Chapters of *Canonical* Scripture which are omitted in the *Calendar*, would be more profitably read inſtead of the *Apocryphal* Chapters; it ought alſo to be obſerved, that the Chapters omitted are thoſe of the Old Teſtament, which either recite Genealogies, or the Rules of the Levitical Service, or which relate matters of Fact delivered alſo in other Chapters that are read, or which are hard to be underſtood. This ſeems to Apologiſe for the Churches leaving thoſe to be conſidered at home by them that have ability ſo to do, and appointing ſome *Apocryphal* Chapters to be read, which are more plain, and in that reſpect more profitable for the Common People: Unleſs a Man will ſay, that becauſe the Scripture is all of Divine Authority, it muſt be always more profitable to read any part of that to the people, than to uſe any other Exhortation, or read any other good Leſſon. And then I do not know what place will be left for Sermons, ſince as I ſaid before, they are no more of Divine Authority, than the Apocryphal Leſſons.

3. If it be ſaid, that the reading of theſe as Leſſons, is a *prevailing Temptation* to the Vulgar to take them for Gods Word, or to think them equal to the Writings of the Old and New Teſtament: I believe there is no ſufficient ground for this. I never heard of

any of our Communion that were led into that miſtake. It is certain, that our Church declareth thoſe Leſſons to be no part of Canonical Scripture, and in the 6*th*. Article ſaith, That they are *read for example of Life, and inſtruction of Manners, but that it doth not apply them to eſtabliſh any Doctrine:* And herein ſhe follows the Judgment and Practice of the Primitive Church, which diſtinguiſheth between the *Canonical* and *Apocryphal* Books, eſteeming thoſe to be of Divine Authority, theſe not ſo, but indeed Godly Writings, profitable to be publickly read. And why the ſame uſe of them may not be retained with the ſame diſtinction, I can ſee no good Reaſon. For the Church of *Romes* receiving the *Apocryphal* Books into her *Canon*, is not likely to miſlead any of our Communion; ſince we are not ſo forward to take their Opinion in any Matter of Religion.

But in the laſt place, There is no *Apocryphal* Leſſon read in our Churches upon any *Lords day* in the year, and ſo there is not this pretence againſt Communion with us upon the *Lords days*, when it is that we do ſo earneſtly deſire the Communion of thoſe that have ſeparated from us. And therefore I ſhall at preſent ſay nothing to thoſe Exceptions which are taken from the *Matter* of ſome of the *Apocryphal Books*, as that ſome Relations are pretended to be *Fabulous*, &c. For this would engage me to a greater length than I intend. But whoever thinks himſelf capable to judge of this Controverſie, may receive ſatisfaction from what Dr. *Falkner* has ſaid upon it in his *Libertas Eccleſiaſt.* p. 164, &c.

To proceed; Although the *Communion Service* for the Gravity and Holineſs thereof is preferred by the Diſſenters before all other Offices in the *Common-Prayer-Book*, yet that has not paſt free from Exception. The Paſſages that ſeem to be diſliked are two.

1. That

1. That Petition in the Prayer before Conſecration, *That our ſinful Bodies may be made clean by his Body, and our Souls waſhed by his moſt precious Blood.* Here they ſay a diſtinct efficacy of cleanſing, and a greater efficacy is attributed to the Blood of Chriſt, than to his Body; inaſmuch as the cleanſing of our Souls is attributed to the Blood of Chriſt, whereas our Bodies are ſaid only to be cleanſed by his Body.

Now in anſwer to this, I ſuppoſe it is plain from thoſe Words at the delivery of the *Bread* and *Wine*; *The Body of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which was given for thee, preſerve thy Body and Soul unto everlaſting life. And the Blood of our Lord*, &c. It is, I ſay, plain from hence, that our Church teaches the Sanctification and Salvation of our Souls and Bodies, to flow from the *Body* as well as the *Blood of Chriſt*. And therefore that former Paſſage is not to be Interpreted, as if our Souls were not cleanſed by the *Body of Chriſt*, becauſe they are ſaid to be waſhed by his Blood. For the ſaying of this does not exclude the other. When the Apoſtle ſaid, *We being many are one Bread and one Body, for we are all partakers of that one Bread*, 1. Cor. 10. 17. Though he expreſt only the Bread of the *Euchariſt*, yet no man will ſay he meant to exclude the *Cup*, as if the Unity of the Church would be argued only from their partaking in that one kind. And when he ſaid, *that we have been all made to drink into one Spirit*, 1 Cor. 12. 13. he meant not to exclude the Participation of the *Bread*, as if that *one Spirit* which animated the Church, was ſignified only by partaking of the Cup. Nor will any Man argue from hence, that he attributes a diſtinct efficacy to the Bread to prove the Unity of the Body, and to the Cup to prove the Unity of the Spirit. I muſt needs ſay, that this Exception was ſought, but never offered it ſelf.

2. The Miniſters delivering the Elements intoe very Communicants hands, with a Form of Words recited to every one of them at the Diſtribution, is blamed alſo, as being thought a departure from the Practice of Chriſt at the firſt Inſtitution of this Sacrament. For they ſay, our Lords Words were, *Take ye, Eat ye, Drink ye all of this*, and therefore the People are not to take the Elements one by one out of the Miniſters hand, nor ought any Form of Words to be uſed particularly to every one that receives. To this I anſwer,

1. That it does not appear from thoſe Words, *Take ye*, &c. which are ſpoken in the Plural Number, that our Saviour did not ſpeak particularly to every one of his Apoſtles when they received, or that he did not deliver the Elements into every particular Mans hand. For the *Evangeliſts* may well be ſuppoſed to give a ſhort account of the Inſtitution of *Chriſt*, not of every Word he then ſaid, but what was neceſſary to be related. And then what might be particularly ſaid or done to every one, would be ſufficiently related, in being related as ſpoken or done generally to all. That is, if Chriſt had ſaid, *Take thou, Eat thou*, to every one of them; this were truly related by the *Evangeliſts*, who tell us that he had ſaid to all, *Take, Eat*, &c. And therefore I do not ſee how it can be proved, that our Practice varies from this *Circumſtance* of the Inſtitution: Tho, if it did, I ſuppoſe it might be as eaſily defended, as the Celebration of the Euchariſt about Dinner time, and not at Supper, which the Diſſenters themſelves ſcruple not. But he that thinks not this Anſwer ſufficient, let him conſult the aforeſaid excellent Book of Dr. *Falkner*, p. 218, &c. where he ſhall find, that it is indeed more probable that our way is agreeable to the way

of

of the Firſt Inſtitution in this Matter, than that which the Diſſenters would have inſtead of it. But for their ſakes who may not have that Book by them, I ſhall add out of it, another anſwer which I think may ſatisfie a Reaſonable Man. Suppoſing then that the *Evangeliſts* did not relate the Matter *Summarily*, but as diſtinctly as the Words were ſpoken by our Saviour. Yet,

2. "Our Saviour alſo Commanded his Diſciples, "*Mat.* 28. 19. to teach all Nations, Baptizing them in "the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the "Holy Ghoſt: But will any Chriſtian think it hence "deducible, That where divers Perſons, or great num- "bers are to be Baptized together, the Solemn Words "of Baptizing them *in the Name of the Father, of the "Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*, may not lawfully be "expreſſed ſeverally to every Perſon? And if the "Baptiſmal Form of Words may be Solemnly and Sui- "tably to that Sacrament applied to every Perſon "Baptized, by the General acknowledgment of all "Chriſtians, there can be no Reaſon why the like "may not be allowed in the Lords Supper. Where- "fore the Practice of our Church herein is no way "*unſuitable to the Inſtitution of Chriſt*, or the Nature "of the Sacrament; and the Alteration of it would "be for the worſe, and to the abating the Solemni- "ty of its Adminiſtration, *Lib. Eccl. p.* 224.

There remains but two more particular Exceptions which I think needful to take notice of, and thoſe are in the Office of Baptiſm. And the firſt I mean, is,

1. That all Baptized Infants are ſuppoſed to be Regenerated; of which, as ſome ſay, we cannot be certain.

But I deſire thoſe that ſay ſo, to conſider if the

Scripture

Scripture does not attribute to Baptiſm, as much as the *Liturgie* does. We are ſaid by Baptiſm to be made Members of Chriſts Body, *By one Spirit we are all Baptized into one Body*, 1 Cor. 12. 13. And *to be Baptized into Chriſt*, and *to put on Chriſt*, Gal. 3. 27. and *he that is in Chriſt is a new creature.* And to be *Baptized for the Remiſſion of ſins*, Acts 2. 38. Baptiſm is alſo called *the waſhing of Regeneration*, Tit. 3. 5. Now if it be made a Queſtion, whether Infants are *Regenerated* in *Baptiſm*; the Queſtion at laſt muſt come to this: Whether they are Qualified to become *Members of Chriſts Body*, to be admitted into God's *Covenant*, to receive Pardon of *Original* Sin, and to become *New Creatures*, gaining that State by *Grace*, which they could not have by Nature? And I do not ſee, that any but *Anabaptiſts* can deny this. For they that contend, as we do, that Infants are capable of *Baptiſm*, muſt not deny them to be qualified for this *Grace* of Baptiſm, unleſs they will make the Ordinance and Promiſes of God to be of none effect towards them. Now if Infants do by *Baptiſm* gain *Remiſſion of Sin*, and are made *Members of Chriſt*; they are *Regenerated* and *Born a-new*. If they do not gain this by it, what does their Baptiſm ſignifie? Or what benefit can they be ſuppoſed to have by it, if they die in their Infancy, more than if they had not been Baptiz'd at all? This is the only means of Salvation they can have. And thoſe expreſſions of the Scripture above recited, with many more, will juſtifie our Church, which ſuppoſes that this means will be effectual, ſo long as they are capable of none other, and therfore ought to be conſidered by thoſe that make it to be of none effect.

I ſhall only add, That this had been thought a ſtrange Queſtion in the Ancient Church, whether Infants

fants were *Regenerated by Baptiſm*, when the *Pelagians*, whoſe cauſe led them to deny it, yet durſt not do it directly, becauſe they knew it would not be endured; and therefore they confeſſed that Infants were to be Baptiz'd, to qualifie them for the *Kingdom of Heaven*, but not for the *Remiſſion of Sin*. So that they themſelves ſeemed to acknowledge the ſaving effect of Baptiſm to Infants; though as St. *Auſtin* often ſhewed them, they contradicted themſelves by ſo doing. But they durſt do no otherwiſe, becauſe the Doctrine of the Church was ſo plainly againſt them in this matter, and every Believer was ſo ſettled in it, that I remember St. *Auſtin* ſomewhere ſpeaks to this purpoſe, that the *Pelagians* would have come to the point, and denied that the Baptiſm of Infants ſignified any thing at all to their Salvation, and therefore might be as well let alone; but that they were afraid the Mothers themſelves of thoſe Children would every where reproach them for it.

The other Objection againſt the Office of *Baptiſm*, is this, That the *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*, that anſwer for Infants, are not their *Parents* or *Guardians*, but others, who have, they ſay, *no Authority* to *Covenant* or *Act in their Names*. In anſwer to which, I ſhall omit ſeveral things that might be ſaid, and content my ſelf with theſe two things, which I think may be ſufficient.

1. That in all caſes where the Sureties are procured by the *Parents*, there they have *Authority to Covenant* in behalf of the Infant; and this the Objectors muſt grant, I think, upon their own Principles; ſince they contend that *Parents* or *Pro-parents* are fitteſt to act in behalf of the *Baptized* Infants, as having Authority ſo to do, ſince they have the Power to diſpoſe of their Education afterward. For then the Sureties

ties which are by them prevailed with to ſtand for their Children, have at leaſt all that Authority which the Parents can give them. And this is ſufficiently known to be the caſe with us. And this is that which the Church might well ſuppoſe, *viz.* that the Sureties, which contract with the Church in the Infants Name, would be procured by the Parents; ſo that the Parents Contracting in behalf of the Infant, is included in the Undertaking of the Sureties; who although they are required by the Church to anſwer for the Infant, yet are they ſuppoſed to be *Authoriz'd* by its Parents alſo, ſo to do.

2. The good Deſign of this Order and Appointment in the Church ought to be conſidered, which is not the leſs, for the fault of Men, and the looſeneſs of theſe times, that does often defeat it. For hereby the Church taketh greater ſecurity, that the Infant ſhall be brought up in the Knowledge and Practice of that Holy Covenant into which it is Baptiz'd: In as much as beſides the care of the Parents, which is in effect promiſed, and may be more reaſonably rely'd upon without their own Solemn Act, upon the account of that *Natural Affection* which makes them particularly concerned; beſides this, I ſay, there is a *Particular Obligation* laid upon others alſo, to ſee that the Infant be ſo Educated, as much as in them lies. In caſe the *Parents ſhould die* before the Child is grown to years of Diſcretion, the Sureties are then more Particularly Obliged to look to their God-child, that he be put into a way of learning and doing his Duty. If they *ſhould not die* before, but be *remiſs*, the Sureties have Authority to come to them and Admoniſh them of their Duty, and to let them know, that ſince themſelves were deſired by them to undertake for this Child, they as ſuch Sureties

ties are particularly concerned to mind the Parents of their Duty, and if need be to *rebuke them ſharply* for neglecting it; ſince they did in effect, and to all purpoſe of Obligation undertake for the performance of it, when the Sureties undertook for the Child. Moreover when *the Child is grown to years of Knowledge*, and come abroad into the World, *he is liable to* the Charitable Admonitions of his Sureties as well as of his Parents, in caſe he does amiſs, and their Reproofs are more likely to take place, than thoſe of moſt other Perſons. Now though all *Chriſtians*, as *Members of one Body* are to take care of, and to watch over one another, yet ſome are more Particularly Obliged, and have greater Advantages to do thoſe Works of Spiritual Charity than others. And I appeal to all conſidering Men, if *Sureties at Baptiſm*, may not with great Authority, and with likelyhood of good effect, Reprove both thoſe *Negligent Parents* and *Unruly Children* for whom they have undertaken to the Church. The Parents for not minding to Educate their Children in the knowledge and keeping of the Baptiſmal Vow; or the Children for not hearkening to good Admonition. And in this Age when the Duty of Chriſtian Reproof is ſo generally omitted; it were well if the defect were this way a little ſupplied. But it is by no means deſireable that the opportunity thereof, and the obligation thereunto ſhould be taken away. I know ſome will be apt to ſay, that this is but rarely Practiſed. But that is no ſufficient Anſwer to what I have ſaid. For when we uſe to judge of the goodneſs of a Rule or Cuſtom by the good that comes of obſerving it, we muſt look where 'tis kept, though it be kept but by few, and not where 'tis broken. And if the Diſſenters have nothing to ſay againſt the uſe

of Sureties, but that the end of this Appointment is ſeldom regarded, themſelves may help to remove this Objection, by returning to the Church, and encreaſing the number of thoſe that do purſue the End of it. And thus doing they ſhall have the benefit of this Order of the Church, and the Church the benefit of their good Examples.

As for the uſe of the *Interrogatories* put to the Sureties, and their *Anſwers*, they are a Solemn Declaration of what Baptiſm doth oblige all Baptiz'd Perſons to, and that Infants do ſtand ingaged to perform the Vow of Baptiſm when they ſhall come to years of knowledge. This is the known meaning of the Contract, nor did I ever hear of any that otherwiſe underſtood it; and therefore I ſee not why it ſhould be ſaid to be *liable to miſunderſtanding*.

After all, there is one General Objection yet remaining which ſtill prevails with ſome Perſons, and that is, That ſome of our Prayers are to be found in the *Maſs-Book*, and the *Breviary*, and the *Offices* of the Church of *Rome*. This Objection hath made a great noiſe, but I appeal to Underſtanding Men, if there be any ſenſe in it.

No Man will ſay, that 'tis enough to make any Prayer, or Form of Devotion or Inſtruction unlawful to be uſed, that the ſame is to be found in the *Maſs-Book*, &c. For then the *Lords Prayer*, the *Pſalms*, and a great part of the Scriptures beſides, and the *Creeds* muſt never be uſed by us. And therefore whether any part of the *Roman* Service is to be uſed by us or not, muſt be judged of by ſome other Rule, that is by the Word of God. So that 'tis a vain Exception againſt any part of our Liturgie, to ſay it was *taken out of the Maſs-Book*, unleſs it could be ſhewn withal, that it is ſome part of the *Romiſh Superſtition*. I know it has

has been ſaid, that the Scriptures being of neceſſary uſe are to be retained by us, though the Church of *Rome* retains them; but that there is not the ſame Reaſon for Forms which are not neceſſary; but in thoſe we ought to go as far from that Church as ever we can. But what reaſon is there for this? For the Danger that may happen *to us* in coming too near them, lies in things wherein they do ill, not in which they do well. And as for the *Papiſts* themſelves, we do not in the leaſt countenance them wherein they are wrong, by agreeing with them wherein they are right. And as for the *Things* themſelves, they are not the worſe for being uſed by them. We ſhould allow the *Papiſts* a greater Power to do miſchief than they have, if their uſing of ſome good things ſhould render all uſe of them hurtful to us. The Caſe in ſhort is this, When our Reformers were intent upon the Reformation of the Liturgie, they deſigned to Purge it of all thoſe corrupt Additions, which the uſurpt Authority of the Church of *Rome* had long ſince brought into it; and to retain nothing but what was agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, and to the Practice of the purer Ages of the Church. And in this they did like Wiſe Men, becauſe thus it would be evident to all the World, that they Reformed upon juſt and neceſſary Reaſons, and not meerly out of a deſire of Change and Innovation; ſince they Purged the Forms of Divine Service, from nothing but Innovations and Corruptions, and an unpoſitable croud of Ceremonies. No Man can ſhew a good Reaſon why thoſe Paſſages in the Common-Prayer-Book, which are to be found in the *Maſs-Book*, but which were uſed alſo by the Church before *Romaniſm* had Corrupted it, are not as much to be Valued becauſe they were once uſed by good Chriſtians, as to be run down becauſe

they have been ſince uſed by Superſtitious and Idolatrous Men. But to conclude this Matter, If any Man would ſet himſelf to expoſe the *Maſs-Book*, he would I ſuppoſe lay hold upon nothing but the Corruptions that are in it, and things that are obnoxious to juſt reproof; not on things that are juſtifiable and may eaſily be defended. And the reaſon of this is plain, becauſe the *Maſs-Book* is to blame for thoſe parts of it only, but not for *theſe*. Now for ſuch Paſſages as the *Maſs-Book* it ſelf is not to be blamed for, neither is our *Liturgie* to be blamed, if we will ſpeak juſtly of things, and without Prejudice and Paſſion.

I have now conſidered all thoſe Exceptions againſt the Solemn Service of God by our Liturgie, which the Diſſenters are thought to inſiſt moſt upon. Not but that ſome other Exceptions have been made by the Miniſters of that perſuaſion: But this I hope was without deſign to prejudice the People againſt our Communion, but rather to gain ſome alterations, which in their Judgment would have been advantageous to the Book of Common-Prayer, and given it a greater perfection; whether they were right in this or not, I will not now diſpute; being very deſirous, as I pray God we may all be, to avoid Controverſies in this Matter as much as may be. Nay I believe thoſe Prejudices of the *Lay*-Diſſenters againſt the Common-Prayer, which I have endeavoured to remove, have wrought in them a greater averſion to it, than the beſt Divines of that way intended; (I ſhould be very ſorry to find my ſelf miſtaken in this.) And this conſideration was ſome encouragement to me to give a true account of thoſe things they ſeemed to diſlike moſt of all.

Which I have endeavoured upon the plain grounds of *Reaſon* and *Scripture*, almoſt wholly avoiding appeals

peals to other *Church Antiquity*, not but that great regard is to be had of it, and that we can defend our ſelves by it; but becauſe they are very few in Compariſon who are qualified to Examine this kind of Argument. And the like I ſay of the Concurrence of other Reformed Churches with us in thoſe things that are diſliked.

As for the Sign of the *Croſs in Baptiſm*, it is pretended that this is a *part of Worſhip*, or a *Sacrament of Mans making*. The contrary to which, has been ſo plainly ſhewn in late Diſcourſes, that unleſs I am called to give an account of it, I cannot think fit to trouble you with this Diſpute. But I heartily deſire our Brethren to conſider at length, that though the uſe of this Ceremony were not ſo eaſie to be defended as I think it is, yet that it is no Condition of Communion, becauſe the *People* are not required to Sign with the Sign of the Croſs, but the *Miniſter* only.

As for *Kneeling at the Communion* of the Holy Table, that is indeed every Communicants Act, but of this you may expect a Diſcourſe from another Hand, which I hope will give ſatisfaction to all Sober Perſons, that are yet unſatisfied about it.

And now I intreat all thoſe of the Diſſenting Party, into whoſe hands theſe Papers ſhall fall, that they would ſeriouſly conſider, whether it be fit to venture the *Guilt* of *Schiſm*, and the *ſad Conſequences* of it, likely to come to paſs, upon ſuch grounds as theſe: Let us at length conſult for the Honour of this Age with Poſterity, who will ſtand amazed to find a Separation of Proteſtants from this Church, carried on ſo long upon ſo little occaſion given, and ſuch weak Objections ſo ſtrongly inſiſted upon, as to build an oppoſite Communion upon them. Let us Conſult the *Honour* and the *Safety* of the Reformation, and no longer

longer ſuffer it to be expoſed to ſcorn and danger, to be Laught at, and Diſgraced by the *Papiſts*, our dangerous Enemies always, but never *more dangerous* than now. If the *Diſſenters* are not yet convinced, that the wide breach they have made in the Communion of *Proteſtants*, will certainly let in *Popery*, if it be not prevented by a timely cloſing with the *Church of England:* Nothing remains but to wait till they are convinced by the laſt Extremity. I can take no comfort in being aſſured that at laſt they will believe it, when, alas! it will be to no purpoſe to believe it. I beſeech them to conſider, whether we are likely to be united in any other Communion, but that of the *Church of England* as it is by *Law Eſtabliſhed*; and whether ſo little account ought to be made of Law and Authority, as to ſay that our Governours may as well come down to them, by forbearing to require what they diſlike; as they come up to the Law, by doing what it requires. Will our caſe bear this wantonneſs? Will ſuch Expreſſions conſiſt with our Duty? I beſeech them by what is moſt dear to them, by the Honour of God, and the Love of Chriſt, and the Care of their own Souls, and the Charity they have for the Souls of other Men, that they will take pains with themſeves to lay aſide Prejudice, and Anger, and all Paſſions that obſtruct a clear Judgment of things that have been diſputed amongſt us, and that they would conſider impartially what we have ſaid, as in the ſight of God who knoweth the Hearts of Men. Can they propound to themſelves more beneficial Deſigns, than to check the Prophaneneſs and Atheiſm which in this laſt Age hath been ſo much complained of, than to reſtore in ſome meaſure the Ancient Diſcipline of the Church for the excluding of vicious Men from the Communion of the

Faithful

Faithful, than to tranſmit the Profeſſion of the true Religion Eſtabliſht among us, down to their Poſterity? The moſt effectual means by which they can contribute to all thoſe good Ends, is to return heartily and unanimouſly to the Communion of the Church of *England*; all the true Sons whereof are ready to receive them with open Arms, with joy and thankfulneſs to God, and to them, for the good they will do us and themſelves by it. But as for them, that for Wordly and Corrupt Intereſts, encourage and ſupport the preſent Separation from this Church, I cannot expoſtulate with them in this manner, ſince ſuch Men have not the fear of God before them, and 'tis impoſſible they ſhould be touched with tenderneſs for the Concerns of Religion, while they continue as they are. All I ſhall ſay to them is, That when that great day of Judgment comes, which they of all Men have moſt reaſon to be afraid of, then all the diſmal Conſequences of this Schiſm which are likely to happen, will be fully required at their hands to be ſure; whilſt thoſe that in meer Ignorance and Miſtake have contributed to them, ſhall have an eaſier Account to give, eſpecially if they have taken pains to inform themſelves better.

What good Effect our Applications to Men will have, we cannot ſay; but if it ſhall appear that they are not yet prepared for Inſtruction; we have the more reaſon to turn our ſelves to God by earneſt Prayer, that he would pleaſe to open the Underſtandings of the ſimple, and to detect the ill Deſigns of diſhoneſt Men; and to enable us to bring forth more and better Fruits of Repentance, that whatever happens to this Church, *it may not be forſaken of his Favour and Protection*, Amen.

FINIS.